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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

French colonial question, 1789-1791. Dealings of the constituent assembly with problems arising from the revolution in the West Indies. By Mitchell B. Garrett, Ph.D., acting professor of history, Saint Lawrence university. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: George Wahr, publisher, 1916. 167 p. \$1.25)

As stated in the preface, former writers on the French colonies in the West Indies have not given a clear and accurate account of the "efforts of the national deputies at Paris to understand and redress the colonial grievances." By a painstaking study of the records of the constituent assembly the author of the present volume has attempted to supply the deficiency.

In chapters one and two the colonial factions and grievances are set forth. The whites of the French West Indies were divided into three classes: planters, government officials, and *petits-blancs*. Planters for the most part lived in the colonies, yet a wealthy minority resided in France as absentee landlords. Of this number one hundred and fifty sat in the constituent assembly as national deputies. The government officials were a "lot of arbitrary soldiers, supercilious bureaucrats, and pedantic lawyers" sent out by the king. The *petit-blancs* were "small traders, adventurers and nondescripts in the cities and slave overseers and mechanics in the country," many of whom were of "shady character and noted for their brutality, their lawlessness and their hatred of the colored race." The colored population was also divided into three groups: mulattoes, free blacks, and slaves. The mulattoes numbered about 45,000 as compared with 83,000 whites. Some of them were educated and wealthy, but all were treated by the whites as social inferiors and not admitted to the learned professions. To escape this color distinction many mulattoes made prolonged visits in France. The free blacks were poor, ignorant outcasts, disliked by both mulattoes and whites. The number was small and the rôle played by them insignificant. The slaves were mere chattels, but they outnumbered the free population five or six to one.

The mother country gave her dependencies military protection for which she claimed a monopoly of the colonial trade. The whole exterior régime caused the planter no end of annoyance, as did also the interior régime, in the hands of a civil and military bureaucracy at the head of which were the governor and intendant. These men were given consider-

able power and patronage which the planter claimed they greatly abused. As a result of these conditions the planters were discontented. They desired local self-government, a voice in the administration of the exterior control and a modification of the navigation acts. The problem that confronted them was how to bring about these changes and at the same time guarantee the existence of slavery and the slave trade. Already the mulattoes were demanding the abolition of the "aristocracy of color" and the slaves, since the founding of the *Société des amis des noirs* in Paris in 1788, had a champion for their cause beyond the sea who was working for the abolition of the slave trade and the gradual emancipation of the slaves. The remaining four chapters are devoted to the struggle carried on by these different factions both in the colonies and in France.

This study of conditions of affairs in the French West Indies is of value only to students of the period of the French revolution. So much knowledge is presupposed that those unfamiliar with the men and events of the time would derive but little benefit from reading it. For the special student, however, there are some well organized details not to be found elsewhere so well presented in secondary accounts.

N. M. MILLER SURREY

José de Gálvez, visitor-general of New Spain (1765-1771). By Herbert Ingram Priestly, assistant curator, Bancroft library, University of California. [University of California publications in history, volume V] (Berkeley: University of California press, 1916. 448 p. \$2.75)

The latest addition to the *University of California publications in history* fully maintains the high standard of that series and proves an admirable companion volume to the previous numbers by Smith and Bolton and a necessary supplement to Chapman's *Founding of Spanish California*. It is, therefore, doubly welcome as evidence of fruitful coöperation and earnest of further productiveness.

The introductory chapters, forming about a third of the book, are of more than passing interest. The biographical sketch of Gálvez, with many regional and personal details, is, in a book of this sort, as unexpected as it is helpful. The chapter devoted to "The historical background" gives a very necessary setting for those that are to follow. It is well to emphasize, as the author does, the growing influence of France, during the eighteenth century, in Spanish councils, largely at the expense of England, and the necessary emphasis upon fiscal reform for the sake of increasing the national revenues. In this task of guiding the policy of Spain commercial agents played a greater part than regular